

Collins, NBA's first openly gay player, dies at 47 of brain cancer

BY TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Jason Collins, the NBA's first openly gay player who went on to become a pioneer for inclusion and an ambassador for the league, has died after an eight-month battle with an aggressive form of brain cancer, his family announced Tuesday.

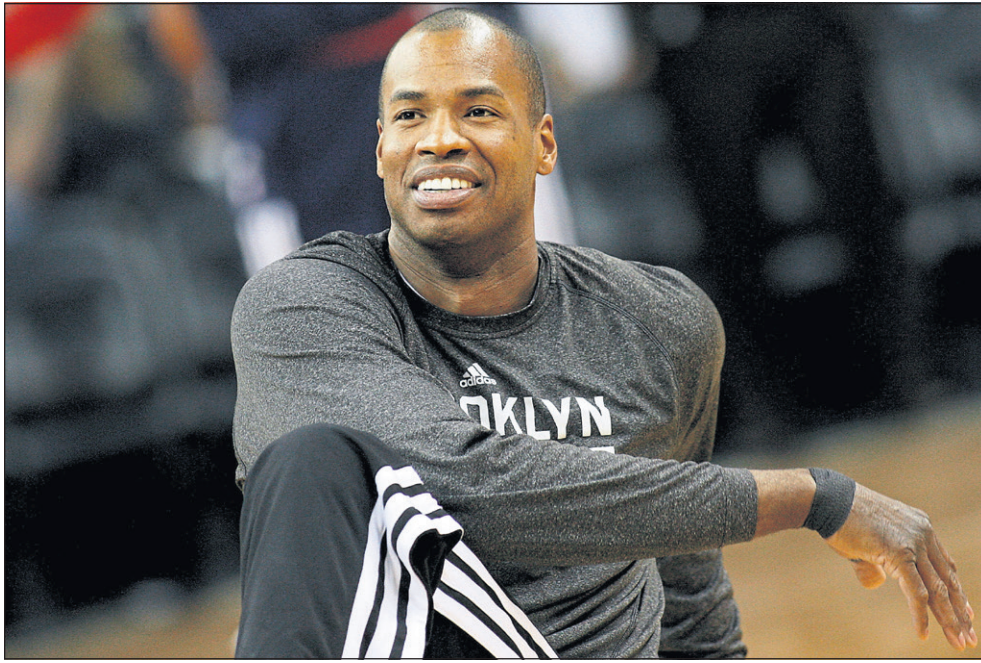
Collins spent 13 years as a player in the league for six different franchises. He revealed in 2013 that he was gay, an announcement that came toward the end of his playing career.

Collins had been diagnosed with Stage 4 glioblastoma, which has an extremely low survival rate. He was 47.

"Jason changed lives in unexpected ways and was an inspiration to all who knew him and to those who admired him from afar," Collins' family said in a statement released through the NBA. "We are grateful for the outpouring of love and prayers over the past eight months and for the exceptional medical care Jason received from his doctors and nurses. Our family will miss him dearly."

Just last week, Collins received the inaugural Bill Walton Global Champion Award at the Green Sports Alliance Summit. He was too ill to attend and his twin brother, former NBA player Jarron Collins, accepted for him.

"I told my brother this before I came here: He's the bravest, strongest man I've ever known,"



Jonathan Bachman | Associated Press

Brooklyn Nets center Jason Collins warms up before an NBA basketball game in New Orleans on March 24, 2014.

Jarron Collins said while accepting that award.

Jason Collins averaged 3.6 points and 3.7 rebounds in his career. He helped the New Jersey Nets reach two NBA Finals and in his best season averaged 6.4 points and 6.1 rebounds for them in 2004-05.

"Jason Collins' impact and influence extended far beyond basketball as he helped make the NBA, WNBA and larger sports community more inclusive and welcoming for future generations," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "He exemplified outstanding leadership and professionalism throughout his 13-year NBA career and in his dedicated work as an NBA Cares Ambassador. Jason will be remembered not only

for breaking barriers, but also for the kindness and humanity that defined his life and touched so many others.

"On behalf of the NBA, I send my heartfelt condolences to Jason's husband, Brunson, and his family, friends and colleagues across our leagues."

Jason Collins spent the bulk of his career with the Nets, and also played for Atlanta, Boston, Memphis, Minnesota and Washington.

"This one hurts," Dallas coach Jason Kidd, a former teammate and coach of Collins, wrote on X. "Jason Collins was a pioneer. He had courage like you've never seen. He was an incredible teammate. And having him in Brooklyn at the start of my coaching journey meant so much. Those who

knew him were blessed to call him a friend. You are already missed my brother. Rest in power."

Jason Collins revealed his sexuality in a first-person account for Sports Illustrated in April 2013. He was a free agent at the time, said he wanted to keep playing, and went on to play in 22 games with Brooklyn the following season.

"If I had my way, someone else would have already done this," he wrote at that time. "Nobody has, which is why I'm raising my hand."

His decision was widely lauded, with star players such as Kobe Bryant quickly speaking out in support of Collins. There was even support from the White House and then-former President

Bill Clinton — whose daughter, Chelsea, went to Stanford with Collins. At Stanford, Collins was roommates with someone who was part of another American political dynasty, that being Joe Kennedy III, who spent eight years in Congress representing Massachusetts.

Collins, in the piece for Sports Illustrated, wrote that he realized he needed to go public about his sexuality when Kennedy walked in Boston's gay pride parade in 2012 — but Collins couldn't do the same.

Until then, Collins kept his feelings about gay rights close to the vest. He wore jersey No. 98 for the majority of his final three playing stints with Boston, Washington and Brooklyn — a nod to the year that Matthew Shepard, a gay college student in Wyoming, was killed. He also wore 46 in one game for the Nets, since it was the only jersey the team had available when he signed.

Tributes poured in Tuesday from around basketball and beyond. The Human Rights Campaign, a civil rights advocacy group, released a statement that said in part, "stepping forward as he did boldly changed the conversation. He was and will always be a legend for the LGBTQ+ community."

Added Arn Tellem, the agent who represented Collins: "Representing Jason Collins was one of the great honors and privileges of my life — not only as an agent, but

as a counselor and confidant. ... The courage he showed changed lives and transcended our game. His impact reached far beyond basketball."

A moment of silence was held Tuesday before the Minnesota at San Antonio playoff game, in tribute to both Collins and Memphis Grizzlies forward Brandon Clarke — whose death was announced Tuesday as well. The Spurs lauded Collins not just for breaking barriers, but for "his bravery and kindness."

Collins made nearly 61% of his shots in his career at Stanford, which remains a school record. He was an honorable mention selection for The Associated Press' All-America team in 2001, a few months before the Houston Rockets took him with the 18th pick in that year's NBA draft.

"It's a sad day for all of us associated with Stanford basketball when we lose one of the program's greats," former Stanford coach Mike Montgomery said. "We all have great memories of Jason and the kind of person he was. It's hard to separate Jarron and Jason because they thought so alike, but even though he was an identical twin, Jason was unique in his own way. The impact he had on Stanford was immense, as he could match up against anyone in the country because he was big, smart, strong and skilled, all while being a very bright and nice person."

McIlroy cuts practice short at the PGA with a blister on his toe

BY BOB LENTZ
AND DOUG FERGUSON
AP SPORTS WRITERS

NEWTOWN SQUARE, Pa. — Good thing Masters champion Rory McIlroy came to Aronimink a few weeks ago for a PGA Championship preview. His first practice round Tuesday didn't last very long. He stopped after three holes because of ongoing blister issues under his right pinky toe.

McIlroy removed his shoe on the fourth tee, got into a cart and headed in. He looked a little better leaving the clubhouse, stopping to sign autographs and pose for a few pictures.

McIlroy had a limp Sunday at the Truist Championship that he said was the result of a blister. That was his only tournament since winning the Masters in April.

"Yeah, I've got a blister on my pinky toe on my right foot, but it's underneath my nail," McIlroy said Sunday. "I can't really get to it, so it's a little sore. But I'll be all right."

McIlroy told Irish media earlier Tuesday he had the nail removed and would be trying to find shoes to limit the discomfort. He has another day of practice — or maybe rest — before the opening round of the PGA Championship.

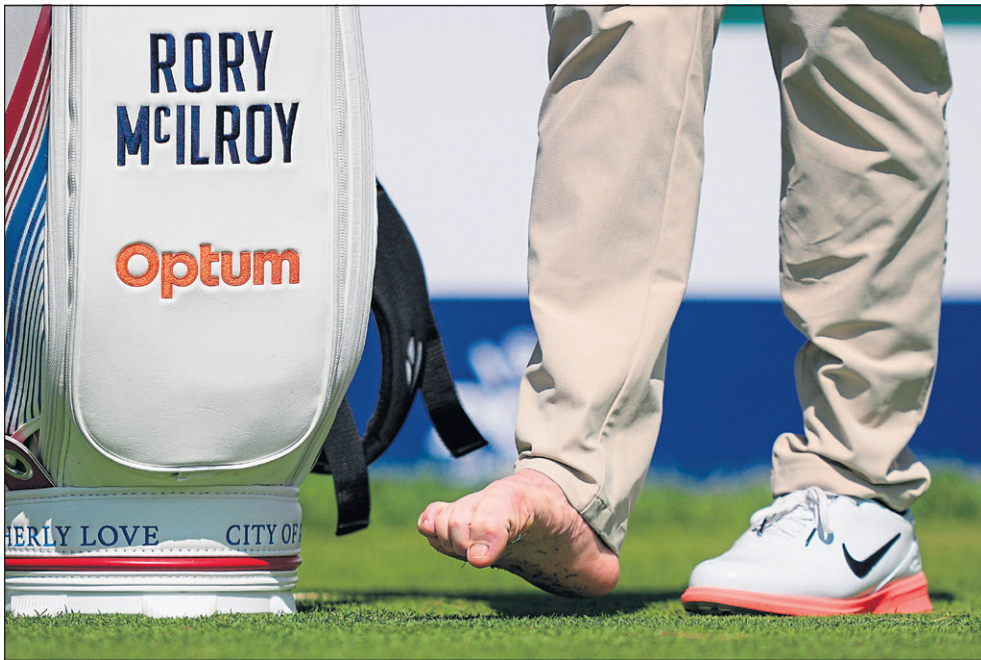
PHILADELPHIA HAS BEEN VERY, VERY GOOD TO JUSTIN ROSE

Justin Rose feels at home in the Philadelphia suburbs.

Rose has a history of success on the Main Line as winner of the 2013 U.S. Open at Merion and a great track record with a win and playoff loss at Aronimink.

The 45-year-old Englishman's second PGA Tour title came in the 2010 AT&T National. He lost to Keegan Bradley in a playoff at Aronimink in the 2018 BMW Championship. Sandwiched between those performances was his lone major victory.

Rose sounded a bit nostalgic explaining his repeated success in the region.



Matt Slocum | Associated Press

Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, attends to his right foot on the fourth tee during a PGA Championship golf tournament practice round at Aronimink Golf Club on Tuesday in Newtown Square, PA.

"I think the whole area feels very familiar to the part of England I live in," he said. "Very leafy, very green. Even this time of year I feel like the spring here is very much like the spring in England right now. So it feels very familiar from that point of view."

It's not just the change of seasons that seemingly puts Rose at ease. The old-fashioned course designs of Merion and Aronimink are part of it, too.

"I like the old-school golf," the 25-time world-wide winner said. "I like old-school tests of golf. I like the design and the architecture of these classic old courses, to be honest with you."

Rose's easygoing ways have made him a fan favorite in the area and he welcomes that rapport.

"It's been a lot of fun to kind of always come back to this part of the country and play."

RAHM'S QUEST FOR A PGA TITLE CAN COMPLETE THE SPANISH GRAND SLAM

Jon Rahm arrives at Aronimink seeking his third major title and with an equally important task for his fellow Spaniards.

Spanish players have won every major but the PGA Championship, the one tournament keeping

the proud country from the Spanish Grand Slam.

Rahm won U.S. Open (2021) and Masters (2023). Seve Ballesteros and Jose Maria Olazabal each won the Masters twice, while Ballesteros was a three-time British Open champion. Sergio Garcia also won the Masters.

Rahm is at a loss to explain the lone missing major title for Spain, considering the talent of his countrymen.

"It does mean a lot. It's not only that, but statistically for whatever reason it's our poorest performance across all majors," Rahm said Tuesday.

"I don't know why, but it is something that is in my mind obviously, having one left. It would be wonderful to close that fourth leg of the Grand Slam. Even though every major is extremely special in that way, to tie it all together with the greats of the past of Spain would be quite

unique."

SCHEFFLER TOOK THE BAIT AND BOUGHT A FISHING TEAM

Scottie Scheffler is casting a wide net, on and off the golf course.

Scheffler, who is defending his PGA title this week, also has interests off the course, such as owning a professional fishing team.

The world's top-ranked player bought the Texas Lone Stars Angling Club in 2024. The team is part of the Sport Fishing Championship and competes in saltwater tournaments.

"I'm definitely interested in other things ... The fishing team is really fun," Scheffler said. "That's something really interesting for me. I love being able to see that. I would like to be able to go to one of them one day. Something like that for me is really fun."

Scheffler said he only gets involved in things he

believes in and is passionate about. Asked whether his ownership has made him a better fisherman, he was brutally honest.

"No. I'm still terrible," he said.

THEY THINK THAT THEY SHALL NEVER SEE A TREE ...

Golf course architects have been trending toward tree removal when restoring century-old courses. Not everyone is a fan.

"I've been making this joke for the last few years where I see a lot of golf courses coming in saying, 'Look, 100 years ago, this golf course was like this, there was no trees,'" Jon Rahm said. "Well, in the back of my mind, they planted those trees with the future vision of having those trees in play, and now you're taking them all out."

Rahm said he appreciates the thinking of healthier turf by allowing for sunlight and better air circulation with the wind aiding overall conditions. But a lack of trees can

make it easier, especially if players come into the greens from rough with a shorter club.

Rory McIlroy said the removal of trees at Aronimink eliminates a lot of strategy off the tee, and Xander Schauffele offered an illustration.

"This week you'll see guys kind of gouging it towards the green," Schauffele said. "If there's a tree there, you'd be chipping out sideways. This is the type of rough where you can't get a ball to curve at all. You just grab a high-lofted club and hit a knuckleball and have it kind of trundle somewhere."



Public Notice

Notice is hereby given that Andrew Fleischmann of 9012 West 5th Street Road, Owensboro, KY 42301, has filed an application with the Energy and Environment Cabinet to construct a 35x50 detached metal garage on slab with flood vents. The property is located approximately at -87.282098° W, 37.784752° N.

Any comments or objections can be submitted via email to: DOWFloodplain@ky.gov, Kentucky Division of Water, Floodplain Management Section, 300 Sower Blvd. Frankfort, KY 40601. Call 502-564-3410 with questions.

GARAGE SALE

CENTRAL-Triplett Street, 815
Yard Sale Thursday May 14 from 3pm-6pm and Friday May 15 from 7am to 12pm
Proceeds go to Wendell Foster Residents' Christmas and Birthday Fund

ABSOLUTE AUCTION

Wed., May 13th at 10 AM
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